

Glossary

The following definitions were prepared by the Town of Amesbury Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED) to provide an explanation of technical terms referenced in the Master Plan.

A

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials is a nonprofit, nonpartisan association representing highway and transportation departments throughout the United States and in Puerto Rico organized to foster the development, operation and maintenance of an integrated national transportation system. The association represents five transportation modes: air, highways, public transportation, rail and water.

Adaptive reuse

The conversion or renovation of an existing commercial development to residential uses or a combination of residential and commercial uses.

B

Brownout

A reduction or cutback in electric power, especially as a result of a shortage, a mechanical failure, or overuse by consumers.

Build-out

The maximum amount of building which can take place on a parcel under current zoning regulations and Bylaws.

C

Capacity assessment

The amount of development which the infrastructure and the environment can support.

Community Preservation Act

The Community Preservation Act is statewide enabling legislation to allow municipalities to exercise control over local planning decisions involving the acquisition and protection of open space, support for affordable housing, and the acquisition and preservation of historic buildings and landscapes. Individual communities must vote by ballot to adopt the Act and appoint a committee of local people to adopt a funding plan. The State requires that at least 10% of the annual fund revenues be used to address open space, affordable housing, and historic preservation issues. Up to 70% of the annual fund revenues can be allocated for any combination of the allowed uses, or for land for recreational use. Local communities such as Newburyport, Georgetown and Rowley have adopted the CPA.

Conservation Restrictions

- A conservation restriction is used in perpetuity, or for a specified number of years, to retain land or water areas predominantly in their natural, scenic or open condition or in agricultural, farming or forest use, to permit public recreational use, or to forbid or limit development in the conservation area that will adversely impact the resource(s).
- A preservation restriction preserves a structure or site that is historically significant for its architecture, archeology or associations. The restriction forbids or limits alterations, uses, and modifications of the structure or site.
- An agricultural preservation restriction retains land or water areas predominately in their agricultural farming or forest use. The restriction forbids or limits development that adversely impacts the area.
- A watershed preservation restriction retains land predominantly in such condition to protect the water supply or potential water supply of an area. The restriction forbids or limits development that adversely impacts the area.
- An affordable housing restriction limits the use of all or part of an area to occupancy by persons or families of low or moderate income in either rental housing or other housing.

Cluster Residential Development

A residential development in which the buildings and accessory uses are clustered together into one or more groups separate from adjacent property and other groups within the development by intervening open land.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

Begun in 1974, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is one of the oldest programs in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Program enables municipalities to engage in activities that improve the lives of low and moderate income people, or to eliminate slum and blight at specific properties or in a target area. Activities include but are not limited to, housing, economic development, social services, public facilities and infrastructure, and planning. The Town of

Amesbury receives funds through the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development.

E

Electric DX cooling

A type of heating and/or cooling equipment that is built up from individual components to engineer specifications rather than factory-assembled as a packaged unit. Some types of electric packaged units are also called “Direct Expansion,” or DX, units.

Environmental Impact Report

This report analyzes the effect on the environment of significant projects.

F

Farmland Assessment Act

The Farmland Assessment Act, approved in 1973, removes pressure on farmland owners to sell their land for non-farm purposes by permitting actively farmed land to be assessed and taxed on its farm use value rather than its potential development value.

G

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

A specialized form of information system capable of assembling, storing, manipulating, and displaying geographically-referenced information, i.e. data identified according to their locations. GIS software can be used for scientific investigations, resource management, and development planning. For example, GIS might allow emergency response planners to calculate emergency response times in the event of a natural disaster or environmental engineers to identify wetland resource protection areas.

Greenbelt

Any stretch of park, open space or other natural setting in a community. An extensive area of largely undeveloped or sparsely occupied land associated with a community set aside to contain development, preserve the character of the countryside and community and provide open space.

H

Home-based business

Business operated by a resident from the premises of his or her own home.

I

Impoundments

A human-engineered, dammed lake, pond, or reservoir.

Inclusionary Zoning

A program with a mandatory requirement or voluntary goal to reserve a certain percentage of housing units for low- to moderate-income residents in new residential developments. These programs create more economically diverse communities, particularly in suburban municipalities. There is no cost to the program for the Town and, if complemented with grants and other incentives, there will not be any additional cost to the developer. Inclusionary zoning is allowable under current Massachusetts General Laws.

Incubator

An entity designed to nurture business concepts or new technologies to the point that they become attractive to venture capitalists. An incubator typically provides both physical space and some or all of the services – legal, managerial, technical – needed for a business concept to be developed. Incubators often are backed by venture firms, which use them to generate early-stage investment opportunities.

Independent Living Center

A consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, nonresidential private nonprofit agency that (A) is designed and operated within a local community by individuals with disabilities, and (B) provides an array of independent living services.

Infill

Developing on empty lots of land within an urban area rather than on new undeveloped land outside the city or town.

Infiltration and Inflow (I/I)

Infiltration occurs when water enters a sewer system from groundwater through defective pipes, pipe joints, service connections, or manhole walls. It occurs whenever the groundwater table is at an elevation above sewer system defects like pipe cracks, joint separations, root intrusions and similar problems. Infiltration is

typically seasonal since groundwater rises during times of peak rainfall in the spring and fall. The rise in groundwater elevations will submerge the piping system under the groundwater table giving groundwater an opportunity to enter via any potential pathway.

Inflow occurs when storm water enters a sewer system from sources such as roof drains, cellar drains, basement or foundation drains, sump pumps, manhole covers, and inadvertent cross connections form between storm and sanitary sewers. Inflow typically occurs during or immediately after a rainstorm or other heavy precipitation.

Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA)

Federal legislation authorizing funding for highways, highway safety and mass transportation through fiscal year 1997. The ISTEA's stated purpose is to develop a National Intermodal Transportation System that is economically efficient, environmentally sound. The system provides the foundation for the nation to compete in the global economy and will move people and goods in an energy efficient manner.

L

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design

A voluntary, consensus-based national standard for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings developed by members of the U.S. Green Building Council representing all segments of the building industry.

Low or Moderate Income

Defined by the U.S Bureau of the Census and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on an annual basis. An individual or family who is low-income is earning 50% or below the median income for the area. A person or family who is moderate-income is earning 80% or below the median income for the area. Amesbury is in the Boston Metropolitan Statistical Area.

M

Main Street Programs

Programs to revitalize central business districts of small cities and towns. Refers most commonly, but not exclusively, to efforts underwritten by the National Main Street Center of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The term may also describe city neighborhood Main Street Programs, such as those in Boston.

Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 40B

In 1969, the State Legislature passed the so-called “anti-snob zoning” law in order to encourage affordable housing development, particularly in cases where public funding is involved and when a community does not have at least 10 percent of its housing stock restricted as affordable. In these cases, a nonprofit, limited dividend corporation, or public entity may apply for a comprehensive permit through the Zoning Board of Appeals to construct housing provided at least 25% of the units are deemed affordable. Affordability guidelines generally follow the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development rulings on Fair Market Rents and Low and Moderate Income Limits.

Median household income

The total monetary income received in a previous calendar year by all household members 15 years old and over, including household members not related to the householder, people living alone, and others in non-family households.

Mixed-use

A development that combines commercial, office and/or residential uses in the same structure.

Multiple Listing Service (MLS)

A service created and run by real estate professionals which gathers all of the property listings into a single place so that purchasers may review all available properties from one source. The MLS also deals with commission splitting and other relations between real estate brokers and agents.

N**National Register of Historic Places**

A list (maintained by the U.S. National Park Service) of areas which have been designated as being of historical significance. The Register includes places of local and state significance as well as those of value to the Nation as a whole. The Register is a national inventory of our historical resources, providing an idea of the total size of this resource base.

Networking

Connecting two or more computers together so that they can communicate with each other. Networking relies on standardized forms of communications so that computers can understand and decipher the information sent from another computer.

New England Economic Project

A member supported economic think-tank which provides economic trend and projection information for all New England states and selected metropolitan areas.

O**Overlay Districts**

A special zone that is drawn on a map outlining a special district or area in a town, or a significant resource, i.e. an aquifer, a watershed, a shoreline, an historic area or a mountain ridge. This district is "overlaid" on the existing land use regulations such as subdivision requirements, site plan review or zoning districts of the town. The overlay district supplements these existing regulations which allow a town to maintain or update current codes while addressing the special needs of particularly sensitive areas.

P**Permitting process**

A process required by local and state authorities for proposed developments to be reviewed for compliance with any applicable Federal, State, and Local codes and regulations.

R**Request for Proposals (RFP)**

The solicitation of proposals based on a generalized scope of work with a contract award to the responsible contractor submitting the most advantageous and responsive proposal.

Restriction

A limitation on the use of real property, generally originated by the owner or subdivider in a deed. Also termed a deed restriction. See also Conservation Restrictions.

Road definitions by Functional Class

- **Arterial:** A road segment that provides service to large land areas and usually connects with other arterial roads or public highway.
- **Collector - Intermediate Links:** Segments that connect major heavily traveled multiple purpose arterial routes and single source local roads.

- **Local:** Segments which connect terminal facilities such as log landings and recreation sites with Forest collector or arterial roads or with public highways. Usually single purpose.

S

Sustainable Developments

A shared commitment to orderly economic development and use, along with an understanding and respect for the capabilities and limitations of the environment to support growth and economic activity over time. Sustainability means managing resources in a manner that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. Sustainable developments do not adversely affect people living elsewhere (near or far) and allow all elements of the community to flourish.

T

Tax-increment financing (TIF)

Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 40, Section 59 allows communities in Massachusetts to adopt and prosecute a tax increment financing plan which can be used to designate an area for improvement. TIFs allow for the reallocation of property tax revenues to such that future growth in property tax revenues is forwarded to the TIF authority to finance debt.

Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA21)

TEA-21 authorizes the federal surface transportation program for the six-year period 1998-2003. See ISTEA definition.

V

Village Center

A traditional center of the community, typically comprised of a cohesive core of residential, civic, religious, and commercial buildings, arranged along a main street and intersecting streets. Industrial uses may be found within or immediately adjacent to these centers.

W

Wayfinding study

A study showing pathways and travel routes within a specific area for use by all modes of transportation.

Sources

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
American Planning Association
Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Laws
Electric Law Library
Energy Information Administration
Fannie Mae Foundation
Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development
Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Construction
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Department of Urban Studies and Planning
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National Park Service
State of Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs
Town of Amesbury Zoning Bylaw
Website Upgrades, Real Estate Glossary
U.S. Census Bureau
U.S. Department of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Energy
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
U.S. Department of Transportation
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency